

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: *Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800 MHz Band; Petitions for Waiver of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Reading, Pennsylvania; Petitions for Waiver of Rockdale County, Newton County, City of Covington, Walton County, and Spalding County, Georgia, WT Docket No. 02-55, Memorandum Opinion and Order.*

FCC Announces Supplemental Procedures and Provides Guidance for Completion of 800 MHz Rebanding, WT Docket No. 02-55, Public Notice.

My goal for 800 MHz rebanding has been for it to proceed as quickly and effectively as possible. In light of that goal, the Commission has devoted significant resources to 800 MHz rebanding by working closely with all 800 MHz stakeholders – public safety, Sprint Nextel, equipment vendors, and the Transition Administrator – to resolve contested issues and expedite the pace of rebanding activity. To date, the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has issued over 25 orders and public notices resolving disputes and provides guidance to negotiating licensees that we expect to help speed ongoing negotiations.

While the Commission has hoped to be further along, we are committed to ensuring that 800 MHz rebanding is completed in a timely manner while, at the same time, protecting full continuity of public safety operations during the transition. Today's actions demonstrate that commitment. Among other things, the Order finds that Sprint has not met its 18-month benchmark for clearing Channel 1-120 incumbents as required by the 800 MHz rebanding process, and imposes new benchmarks on Sprint, including monthly reports on its channel-clearing efforts, to bring the process back on track. The order also reaffirms Sprint's obligation to vacate its remaining spectrum in Channels 1-120, as well as other portions of the 800 MHz band that are to be made available to public safety, in accordance with prior Commission orders.

As the companion Public Notice makes clear, the obligation to complete the rebanding process does not fall on Sprint alone, but requires all stakeholders to redouble their efforts. The Commission will continue to do its part to ensure that the 800 MHz rebanding process is completed in a timely and efficient manner, minimizing the burden on public safety, and preserving public safety's ability to operate during the transition. To do otherwise would abdicate our responsibility at a time when it is more important than ever to ensure that first responders have the communications capabilities they need to provide for the safety of our nation and its citizens.